

Story 2008 (1969 Tapes 16-17)

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Shining Girl<sup>1</sup> and the Padishah's Son—A Fragment

One day while a certain padishah was sitting on a bench in his garden, an old dervish came along and said to him, "Selamünaleyküm, my padishah."

"Aleykümselam,"<sup>2</sup> answered the ruler. "You must be a very wise man, for you knew at once that I was a padishah. You may also know, therefore, both the problem that I have and the solution for that

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<sup>1</sup>Throughout this tale the female lead is called Hızma, a word that does not appear in either Standard Turkish dictionaries or Turkish dialect dictionaries at ATON. Hız means speed, but there is nothing either swift or slow about this girl. Hızma refers to a nose ring set with a diamond or emerald, a fashionable beauty accent worn by women of affluence. Not very common in Turkey, such rings are seen mainly in southeastern provinces; they appear more frequently in Pakistan and India. The girl here does not wear a sparkling hızma, but she is apparently called Hızma because of a glowing appearance given to her by her preternaturally gleaming hair.

<sup>2</sup>Selamünaleyküm/Aleykümselam—traditional exchange of greetings between Muslims not well acquainted with each other. It means roughly May peace be unto you /And may peace be unto you too. If Selamünaleyküm is not responded to, the speaker should be wary of the one so addressed.

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problem. My wife and I have long wanted a child, but we have been unable to have one. Can you help us in this matter?"

"Yes. Have your wife eat half of this apple, and then you eat the other half. Your wife will become pregnant, and in due time she will bear a son. But you must not name that child, for I shall return later and name him."<sup>3</sup> Having said this, the old dervish disappeared.

The padishah and his wife ate that apple and (just as the dervish had said) she later bore a boy. Everyone called him Nameless Bey.<sup>4</sup>

When the boy had grown to be a young man, he told his father that he would like to go hunting. The padishah gave him a bow and some arrows with which he could practice archery so that he would be able to hunt. In that country there was a shortage of water, and people

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<sup>3</sup>Fecundity produced by a magic apple is a common motif in Turkish tales, as is the warning by the supernatural donor not to name the child, something which he himself will later return to do. But in this version of the tale, the narrator forgets to bring him back for the naming ceremony.

<sup>4</sup>In Republican Turkey there are no beys. The term refers to a Turkish aristocrat of Ottoman, Seljuk, and pre-Seljuk times, and goes back to the 8th or 9th century—and perhaps earlier. The bey was a landed nobleman, sometimes wealthy and often politically powerful. In the 10th-century Book of Dede Korkut he was a tribal chief or one of his close associates. The Turkish bey was roughly equivalent to a British lord or baron. But the word is retained in Turkish as a term of respect following a male's given name: Ahmet Bey. It has that honorific function here.

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often had to carry water great distances from the few fountains that had still not gone dry. One day while an old woman was filling her water jar at a fountain, one of the prince's arrows struck the jar and broke it. The prince said to her, "Please do not curse me for this! I shall give you some gold with which to purchase a new water jar." The old woman accepted that money, and with it she went to the marketplace and bought a new jar. On the next day, however, the prince again broke her water jar, and again he sought her forgiveness by giving her gold for another new jar. But when this had happened for a third time, the old woman became angry and said to the prince, "May you search and search for a person called Shining Girl, and may you never rest until you find her."

The prince responded, "Oh, grandmother, why did you curse me? What I did was just a mistake. Because I am still quite young, you should forgive me!" But the old woman refused to remove her curse from him.

The prince returned to the palace, but he was not well. His parents noticed that he was pale and very restless. The padishah soon grew worried about his son, and so he ordered a doctor to examine the young man. After examining the prince, the doctor said to the padishah, "There is nothing wrong with your son's body, but apparently something is bothering him seriously."

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Upon hearing this report, the padishah ordered some of his attendants to find out what was upsetting his son. When these servants asked the prince about his condition, he told them immediately the cause of his discomfort. "After my arrows had broken water jars of an old woman three times, she placed a curse upon me. She said, 'May you search long for a person named Shining Girl, and may you have no rest until you find her.'"

The attendants returned to the padishah and reported to him the cause of his son's condition. The ruler said, "It may be very difficult for us to find a girl known only for her shining quality."

"No matter how difficult the task may be, I shall go and find the girl myself," said the prince. He began his journey, traveling over hills [Tape 17 begins here.] and across plains. After awhile he came to a town where there was a crowd of men waiting before a mosque. He spoke to those waiting there, "Hey, good people, what are you doing here? Why haven't you gone any farther than the entryway of the mosque to say your prayers to Allah?"

A man in the crowd said to the prince, "The giant doorkeeper has locked it, but it has been predicted that a certain young man will be the only one able to open it. We are hoping that that young man will arrive soon." The prince rammed the mosque door with his shoulder



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and burst it open. The crowd then entered the mosque and performed a prayer service.

After the service had ended, the doorkeeper arrived and saw that the mosque door stood open and that the worshipers were just leaving the building. He shouted loudly, "Who dared to open the mosque door?"

"I am the one who opened it," said the prince.

The giant doorkeeper said, "No one but I was supposed to open that door, and until now no one has been able to do so. Why and how did you open it?"

"Just because I opened it does not mean that I did it for any particular reason."

Hearing that, the doorkeeper said to the prince, "I challenge you to a duel, after which the winner will kill the loser." After the young man had accepted that challenge, the two men mounted their horses and attacked each other with swords. It was fierce hand-to-hand combat. When the prince managed to slash open his contender's outer garments, a beautiful young woman emerged. Her name was Black Zengi.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Since Zengi is a variant of Zenci, meaning Negro, the adjective black is redundant.

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“Please do not kill me,” said Black Zengi. “I have been looking for a man stronger than I am. Such a man would be the only one I should be willing to marry.” The prince did not kill her.

Black Zengi was a wealthy girl who owned a palace and other houses. She invited the prince to her palace, where he lived for a few days. The young man then said to her, “I am traveling in search of someone who is known only as Shining Girl, and now I must continue looking for her.”

Black Zengi responded, “If you must go, then I shall accompany you. I may be able to be helpful to you.”

Mounting their horses, they set forth at once. They went from country to country, and everywhere they went, they asked about Shining Girl, “Do you know where she lives?” After asking this question for months, they were finally given an answer.

People in a town where they stopped said, “She lives in that mansion over there. If you sit at the gate of that mansion, the owner will know that you have come with the wish to marry his daughter.<sup>6</sup> But you should know that she has a guard who is a giant, and any

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<sup>6</sup>This is a type of symbolic language which appears often in Turkish folktales and occasionally in Turkish real life. See Walker's and Uysal's Tales Alive in Turkey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 269.

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young man seeking the hand of the girl has to fight with that giant first. Up to this time no one has survived combat with that giant.”

The prince went at once and sat before the gate of the mansion, for he was not afraid of any giant. The giant came out and said, “Young man, by sitting there you have not only asked for the hand of the girl who lives here but you have also challenged me to a duel. I choose wrestling to be our form of fighting. The winner will have the right to kill the loser.”

As soon as the wrestling started, the prince grabbed the giant’s arms and lifted him into the air, and then he slammed his opponent down against the ground. The giant landed there on his back, and he was so badly injured that he could not arise. He said, “Young man, I suppose that you will do that again.”

The prince answered, “I was born but once from my mother’s womb. I slammed you down just once, and I shall not do so again. Once is enough.”<sup>7</sup> (If he had attacked the giant a second time, the monster would not have died but instead would have had all of his

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<sup>7</sup>Although this expression is not listed in proverb dictionaries, it is a formulaic statement used often in Turkish tales. Whenever a character declines an invitation or a challenge to do something twice, he may say, “I was born from my mother’s womb just once.”

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strength restored.<sup>8</sup> )

As the giant was dying, he said to the prince, "I have a brother inside the mansion. He may fight with you also." Soon after that, another giant limped out into the courtyard. He was crippled.

The crippled giant said, "Young man, since you have defeated my strong brother, I do not dare fight with you. Here are the keys to Shining Girl's mansion. Take them. I shall be willing to work for you as a guard."

Taking the keys, the prince unlocked the gate and then the door of the mansion. Once inside the mansion, he went to Shining Girl's room. She had been held hostage in that room by the giant whom the prince had killed, but now that that giant was dead, she was freed. After the prince had lived a few days there, he said to Shining Girl, "I am getting bored here. I think that I shall go hunting for awhile."

"Very well," said the girl.

The young man went hunting, but he had no success in his effort to kill game. No matter how hard he tried to shoot an arrow into

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<sup>8</sup>When a human being fights a multiheaded giant, he often leaves one head unsevered. He knows that to cut off that last head would be to revive the giant to his original strength. The giant knows that, too, and tries to persuade his opponent to cut off the one remaining head.



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his quarry, he did so without striking a single animal or bird. When he returned, he said to Shining Girl, "I could not kill any of my prey, because all the time I was gone, I could think only of you. I could not concentrate on hunting."

The girl cut from her head a lock of glistening hair and handed it to the prince. "Wrap this in a piece of paper," she said, "and carry it in your pocket. When your mind becomes full of thoughts of me, take the paper from your pocket, open it, and look at my hair. Then you will be able to catch game."

When the prince went hunting again the next day, he did as she had suggested. He was then able to kill many animals. He went hunting frequently after that, and he always took the girl's hair with him. That lock of hair brought luck to him. One day while he was hunting, the wind was blowing hard. When he took the lock of hair from his pocket in order to gaze at it, the wind carried it away and blew it into a stream. The prince was not greatly upset by this loss. He said to himself, "Shining Girl's head is full of hair, and she will give me another lock. Why should I worry about it?"

The stream carried the lock of hair all the way to the pool in the garden of the infidel king of that land. While the strand of hair was glistening there, the king took his horse to that pool to let it drink. As the horse approached the water, it neighed loudly. When the king

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looked into the pool and saw the brightly shining lock of hair, he was amazed. He said to himself, "If one lock of hair can shine as brightly as the sun, how very beautiful must be the girl from whose head it was cut." He immediately started a search for a girl whose hair would match the lock in the pool. His men discovered that the lock of hair belonged to Shining Girl.

When the ruler had taken one look at Shining Girl, he decided that he wanted to marry her. His attendants told him that there was a man living in Shining Girl's mansion with her. The ruler then dispatched a number of men to the mansion to kill that man. When the king's men arrived at the mansion, they pretended that they were simply visitors. When they knocked on the door, the prince met them and welcomed them into the mansion. He offered them food and drink and treated them with hospitality. After awhile one of the visitors said to his companions, "We must not forget why we are here. We were sent here to kill this young man."

But others in the group said, "How can we kill such a strong but gentle young man who has not done any harm to us?"

They argued among themselves, some saying that they should kill their host and others saying that they should not. When the prince overheard this argument, he entered the room again and said, "Tell me which of you wish to kill me." When the king's men looked each other



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in the face, they divided into two groups. After the prince had killed those who wanted to take his life, he said to the rest, "You are now free to leave. Go back to your king and give him my greetings."

When those men had returned to the palace, they said, "Your majesty, we met the young man in Shining Girl's mansion. He was so strong and brave that none of us was able to kill him." When the ruler then sent a small army to attack the young man, the prince and the crippled giant routed that army. Some of the troops were killed, and the rest were so confused that they tried to flee. The prince and the giant killed more of them as they fled. Those few who survived returned to the palace and said to their ruler, "That young man is so powerful that it is impossible to defeat him. He has killed most of the soldiers sent against him."

After the king had heard this report, he said to his counselors, "We must use some other method to defeat that young man. We may have to use magic for that purpose. Find a witch<sup>9</sup> and bring her to me." When an old woman was later brought into his presence, he said

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<sup>9</sup>In Turkish folktales the word witch has various connotations. It may be a person associated with cosmic evil. It may be a person with supernatural powers who may or may not also be a ghoul. With or without supernatural powers, it may be an old woman available for hire to undertake nefarious deeds of various kinds. In this latest capacity, she may be simply a shrewd, wily, and unscrupulous accomplice in covert action against someone. It is obvious that the witch here is one with supernatural power, for she is able to fly.

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to her, "I want you to find a way to kill or capture the young man who is living in the mansion of Shining Girl. If you can succeed in doing that, I shall give you a large jar of gold."

The old witch went to that large mansion on a very dark night and began crying out, "I want some bread! Oh, give me some bread!"

When Shining Girl heard this, she said to the prince, "It is too dark to go down there to give anyone bread. We can lower some to her from a window. It is dangerous to go down to the yard, for I have many enemies in this area."

Holding a torch out the window, the prince said, "You can see that it is only an old woman." He then took a loaf of bread, went down to the ground floor, opened the door, and handed the bread to the old woman. As he did so, however, the old woman tripped him and then pushed him into a large urn. Closing the lid of the urn, she mounted it and flew it back to the palace,<sup>10</sup> where the king had the young man thrown into a dungeon.

That king had a daughter who observed the prince as he was being taken to the dungeon. She found the prince to be attractive, and she felt sorry for him. She went to her mother and told her what she

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<sup>10</sup>While witches in western countries supposedly fly on broomsticks, those in Turkey use large urns for their airborne mounts. The Turkish word for such a large earthenware container is küp.

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had seen. She said, "Mother, my father's soldiers have just thrown into the dungeon a handsome young man who is the fiancé of the beautiful Shining Girl, and he will no longer care about you and me at all. We shall be neglected. To prevent that from happening, I shall dress as a man tonight, go to the dungeon, and release the young prisoner. I shall then run away with him."

Her mother asked, "Are you sure that you can do that?"

"Yes, I can." Dressed in male clothing, the girl went that night to the dungeon, where she waited unseen until the guard had fallen asleep. She then killed the guard with her sword and took from his body the key to the dungeon. Opening the door of the dungeon, she shouted down to the prince, "I am throwing you the end of a rope. Hold it tightly, and I shall pull you up." After she had done that, she said to the young man, "I am the daughter of the king who had you captured and imprisoned here. I have saved your life so that I can be yours. You must take me with you wherever you go."

The prince asked, "Are you willing to become a Muslim?"

"Yes, I am," she said. She repeated the statement "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet," and thus was converted to Islam. They then fled from the palace and went to the mansion of Shining Girl.

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The following morning the king discovered that his prisoner had escaped and taken his daughter with him. The king assembled another army and sent it to attack the prince, but, just as before, the prince and the lame giant destroyed his forces. The few survivors returned to the palace and reported that the young man had won the battle. (That young man had been blessed by the old dervish even before he had been born. The dervish had placed upon him a charm that made him invincible.)

After the battle had ended, the prince said to Shining Girl, “As long as we remain here, such attacks against us will continue. I am the son of a padishah, and my father is a powerful and wealthy man. We would do better to go and live in my country.” He then took the girls with him and released the lame giant to return to the land of giants.

When the young man reached his father’s kingdom, he left the princess who had freed him from jail at a separate but fully equipped house. Then he, Shining Girl, and Black Zengi proceeded to the palace. There the padishah welcomed them, but as soon as he saw Shining Girl, he decided that he wanted her for himself. He immediately began thinking about killing his own son. Going to his viziers, he asked them, “What would be the best way to kill my son so that I can afterwards marry Shining Girl?”

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The viziers answered, "Our padishah, you should invite him to a dinner at which you will have poison put in his food. That would be the easiest way of killing him."

But Black Zengi had the ability to foresee the future. When she learned of the dinner to be given for the prince, she cast remil<sup>11</sup> and saw that there was blood in the pears that would be served to him. She warned the prince, "Don't eat any of the food served to you at the dinner your father is holding for you. Throw it to the birds!"<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Remil is a Turkish form of geomancy. Several cubes—sometimes made of wood, sometimes of sheep knuckles—are coded on all six sides with numbers and/or letters and/or signs. After these have been cast upon the ground, the coded markings on the upturned sides are scrutinized carefully to see if the markings form any pattern of meaning. Usually they do seem to suggest some message, but if they do not, they are cast again. Remil is used both to predict the future and to acquire information about some event or situation elsewhere in the world in present time.

<sup>12</sup>In several ATON tales the protagonist is in this way plotted against by his father as a means of getting the girl his son has gone through an ordeal to acquire. See, for example, "The Son of the Carpenter," ATON No. 46.

This is not the end of the tale, but it is very close to the end. In tales of this kind the jealous father is the last obstacle to the marriage (and subsequent happiness) of the protagonist and his beloved. Usually the father's treachery boomerangs, and the father rather than the son is killed.